Minimum Documentation Fiche
composed by regional working party of CAMPANIA, Italy

01. Picture of building

Depicted item: Main elevation
Source: Archivio Vaccaro
Date: 1936

1. Identity of building

1.1 current name of building
Palazzo delle Poste

1.2 variant or former name
The former name was: Palazzo delle Regie Poste e Telegrafi di Napoli

1.3 number & name of street
2, Piazza Matteotti

1.4 town
Naples (Na)

1.5 province/state
Campania

1.6 zip code
80133

1.7 country
Italy

1.8 national grid reference
40°50'37.6"N 14°15'04.8"E
1.9 classification/typology
Post office

1.10 protection status & date
The building is subject to architectural restrictions by Ministerial Decree of June 7, 2001 pursuant to Legislative Decree n.490 of October 29, 1999, article 2, paragraph 1 a).

2 History of building

2.1 original brief/purpose
The Central Post building was built in Naples from 1933 to 1936. It was decided to build a Postal office in this area in accordance with the plan of 1884, which was officially approved in 1913, and then more years passed before the real project could be realized. Indeed, during the first years of the 20th century the Extraordinary Commissioner showed interest for the project and, on the 28th of April 1928, the Ministry of Communications banished the design competition. The winning project was modified many times before the final solution could be reached. During the building’s works significant changes were made to the foundation structures and to the marble front part of the roof.

2.2 dates: commission/completion
Commission 1931 - Completion 1936

2.3 architectural and other designers
Giuseppe Vaccaro, Luigi Franzi

2.4 others associated with building

2.5 significant alterations with dates
The building has not been substantially altered. During the second decade of XXI century, the interiors were adapted to foster the public access. Some linear metal handrails were fixed on the external stairway in order to comply with safety rules.

2.6 current use
The building has retained the original destination until now.

2.7 current condition
Medium. The general conditions are satisfying, except for the many external marble claddings which have been substituted with a fastening system different from the original one.

3. Description

3.1 general description
The curvilinear facade of the building is covered with Vallestrona and black Diorite marble. It defines the whole side of the Matteotti square. In the interiors, the public services are located on the ground floor: two large rooms are separated by a high entrance hall. The other services and the store-rooms are located on the reverse side and along Monteoliveto street. The other offices are located on the two upper floors. The plan in his whole is organized as “a hammer” and the building is contiguous to the Monteoliveto cloister.
3.2 construction
The building was built with concrete structures and was perfectly designed and realized, as it is possible to verify by analyzing the executive plans. The external marble slabs of the basement are thicker than the higher ones. Each slab is connected to the rear structure and is based on the underlying slab. Some of the works carried out were at the forefront for that time, such as the windows’ metal profiles, the plants, the special ups and the lower doors. The building's works lasted for three years, they guaranteed high quality standards and respected the delivery term.

3.3 context
During the years in which the Postal building was built, also other public buildings rose in the urban area called Corsea which was completely restructured. The design of the Central Postal building involved the general urban plan’s revision in this area. The inclined plan of the ground surface was modified and the external stairways connected new Matteotti square with Monteoliveto street. The building stands on a horizontal plan which is taller than the ground level. A large stairway connects the two levels.

4. Evaluation

4.1 technical
Several elements, such as the modern fixtures, some kinds of external doors, the glass and concrete walls, the linoleum floors, the Vetro Desegnat Fontanit finishes, are outdated in technological terms. However, the ability to organize the works, which were monitored every day, the compliance with a work’s schedule regarding the execution time and modalities, guaranteed the building’s quality. The distributions’ solutions are still valid today. Many external finishing’s materials retain their aesthetic value.

4.2 social
The quality of the building was encouraged by the relevant role of the designers Vaccaro and Franz during the building’s works. They weren’t the works’ directors, but they followed closely every detail of the building’s construction. The construction company realized some working changes without excessively increasing the prices. This postal building represented the victory of young architects and of the modern expression of the professionals of the Public Administration against the old style.

4.3 cultural & aesthetic
From the expressive point of view, the building shows similarities with some of Erich Mendelsohn’s buildings, or with the Radio Building of Hans Poelzig in Berlin, or with Alexanderplatz design by Wassili and Hans Luckhardt, in Berlin (competition of 1929). The project competition indicated precisely the limiting dimensions and the links that had to be realized between the new building and Monteoliveto cloister. Therefore, after various proposals, the final design was controlled, since the beginning, from a committee on the basis of specific criteria. We may disagree with these criterias, but we cannot criticize their consistency and proportionality.

4.4 historical
In April 1928, during a cultural confrontation between the Fascist regime and the old top-class administration, the architects Alberto Libera and Gaetano Minnucci inaugurated the L’Esposizione Italiana di Architettura Razionale in Rome. The preliminary competition for the project of the postal
building was announced on the 25th of the same month.

The final competition was announced on the 10th of August 1931, while the MIAR promoted the Seconda Esposizione di Architettura Razionale at the Galleria d’Arte in Rome. The main facade of the building’s design was changed between the preliminary and the final competition and different solutions were designed in a continuous process of semplification, until the final project was reached, in the view of a new architectural culture.

4.5 general assessment
The Central Post building in Naples is one of the most relevant architectures of the first half of the XX century in Europe, full expression of the cultural renewal in a specific historic moment.

5. Documentation

5.1 principal references
PONTI, G., Stile di Vaccaro, in “Stile”, n.27, March 1943.


Archives
Archivio Vaccaro
Archivio delle Poste Centrali di Napoli
Archivio Parisio

5.2 visual material attached
01 Main elevation 1936
02 Plans of basement and ground floor
03 Main elevation at the construction stage
04 Final drawing of foundation slab
05 Entrance Hall. 1936
06 Entrance Hall. 1936
07 Entrance main portal. 1936
08 Night vision of the main façade. 1936
09 Corner of the present-day via Monteoliveto and piazza Matteotti. 1936
10 Public room at ground floor. 1936
11 “Vaglia” room. 1936
12 Entrance hall. 2006
13 Entrance hall. 2006
14 The “loggia” of 16° century. 2006
15 The “loggia” of 16° century. 2006
16 Corner of the present-day via Monteoliveto and piazza Matteotti. 2006
17 Internal staircase. 2006
18 Public room at ground floor. 2006
19 Hall internal balcony. 2006
20 Hall internal balcony. 2006
21 Telegraph room. 2006
22 Telegraph room. 2006

5.3 rapporteur/date
Ugo Carughi_Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali e per il Turismo

6. Fiche report examination by ISC/R

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0.2 Plans of basement and ground floor. (Archivio Vaccaro)
03. Main elevation at the construction stage (Archivio vaccaro)

04. Final drawing of foundation slab (Archivio Poste Centrali di Napoli)
05. 06. Entrance Hall. 1936 (Archivio Vaccaro)
07. Entrance main portal. 1936 (Archivio Vaccaro)
08. Night vision of the main façade. 1936 (Archivio Vaccaro)

09. Corner of the present-day via Monteoliveto and piazza Matteotti. 1936 (Archivio Vaccaro)
10. Public room at Grown floor. 1936 (Archivio Vaccaro)

11 “Vaglia” room. 1936 (Archivio Vaccaro)
12.-13. Entrance hall. 2006 (pictures of Claudio Garofalo)
14. The “loggia” of 16° century. 2006 (picture of Claudio Garofalo)
16. Corner of the present-day via Monteoliveto and piazza Matteotti. 2006 (picture of Claudio Garofalo)
17. Internal staircase. 2006 (picture of Claudio Garofalo)

18. Public room at Ground floor. 2006 (picture of Claudio Garofalo)
19.20. Hall internal balcony. 2006 (pictures of Claudio Garofalo)
21.22. Telegraph room. 2006 (pictures of Claudio Garofalo)
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